

Scotty Thurman. I kind of feel like a politician up here.

The President. You look like one.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:48 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Rose Richardson, wife of Coach Nolan Richardson, and team members Scotty Thurman, Roger Crawford, Kenneth Biley, and Corliss Williamson.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Meeting With Iowa Attorney General Bonnie Campbell

June 15, 1994

The President. Welcome. I'm glad to be here with Attorney General Campbell. I've known her for a long time. I was very pleased by her decisive victory, and I'm glad she's here for a visit about the things that we would be working together on in partnership with the State of Iowa.

Welfare Reform

Q. What are the big issues in the campaign, Ms. Campbell?

Ms. Campbell. I think they may be the same all over the country. In Iowa, it's the budget and questions of taxes, health care reform, welfare reform, protecting the environment. I have had a special interest in child support recovery, which I think is critical to any discussion of welfare reform. So I'm really happy to have an opportunity to talk today about that.

The President. A lot of people believe the strongest part of the bill that I announced yesterday on welfare reform is the child support provisions, because they're the toughest in the history of the country. They permit tracking across State lines, garnishment of wages, suspension of driver's licenses and other privileges. They require the identification of both parents, or at least, they require every hospital to make a real effort to do that whenever there's a birth in a hospital.

And we estimate that we will go from \$9 billion a year to \$20 billion a year in child support enforcement recoveries if this bill passes. And I know that's something that's been very important to Bonnie for a long time.

Q. [Inaudible]—giving Ms. Campbell for the race?

The President. I don't know what she wants me to do, but in the fall, I'll be out trying to help people who share my values and my interests if they want me to do so. I find that most voters in most States are pretty independent. They don't need the President or anyone else to tell them how to vote. But I certainly have admired Bonnie Campbell for a long time. I think a lot of her. And I'm going to be going to an event for her here in Washington tonight.

But what I do depends in part, obviously, on what happens here with the health care debate and how much time it takes and how close it gets to the election, as well as welfare reform and lobby reform and the other things we're trying to do to change the way that Government works and relates to the American people. And, of course, there could be foreign policy issues that require more time.

Q. Mr. President, Senator Harkin, who supported you quite early in your campaign and has been a loyal supporter up on the Hill, was very critical of your welfare reform package yesterday. He's supporting his own bipartisan with Senator Bond that's based on the Iowa plan. And he says that yours goes back to the Depression and is a make-work, dead-end jobs and all that. How does this fit with—

The President. I don't think so. You can have various—States with low unemployment rates can have absolute cutoffs of welfare benefits once certain training programs have been gone through and people are prepared to enter the work force. You can just say you're not eligible for benefits. And as I understand it, that's what the Harkin-Bond bill does.

But if you live in a country where some of these people on welfare live in areas where the unemployment rates may be as high as 20 percent, then if you want to require them to go to work after a certain period of time, it seems to me you have to be willing to either say they're going to do a public service job—not make-work, but work for the city or for the county—or that you will help to subsidize their job in the private sector to make it attractive to hire them, because otherwise you'll be cutting people off benefits

in areas where they will not be able to get jobs in the private sector.

The other major difference is, Senator Harkin's bill, as I understand it, has a graduated cutoff of benefits after you go through a training program from a low of 6 months to a high of 4 years. And ours just has one set 2-year limit, but if any State wants to go beyond it, they're free to do so. That is, since I've been President, we have granted more flexibility to the States in the area of welfare reform and health care reform in a year and a half than in the previous 12 years. We've really encouraged States to go out and try things on their own. So I wouldn't oppose Iowa or any other State implementing a program like that.

Q. —Ms. Campbell, do you have any problem with the welfare plan? You are a supporter of the Iowa plan, aren't you?

Ms. Campbell. I'm a cautious supporter of the Iowa plan. I think the most important thing the President has done is put welfare reform on the agenda. Our plan is being phased in right now. I do think it's progressive and tough, but it remains to be seen. There are some problems with it. One is the availability of day care; one is the availability of jobs. It presumes there are jobs, and we are a low unemployment State.

I want very much for our welfare reform plan to work because the philosophy behind it is investing in people in our society and inculcating the notion of work and reward for work. But we're a long way from knowing whether our own welfare reform will be successful. I hope it is.

The President. Let me also point out that from my point of view, a large part of this national bill is giving the States the power to make welfare reform work. Yesterday I was in Kansas City, and I met with 12 women who had moved from welfare to work. They all agreed that our plan was right to require everybody on welfare to go through one of these job placement programs. But they agreed that to make it work, you would have to provide some transitional aid for people for child care and for medical coverage for the children, that we needed tougher child-support enforcement, and that we ought to have with this a national campaign to try to lower the rate of teenage out-of-wedlock

births, because the truth is that the welfare problem in the country—indeed, the poverty problem in the country—is increasingly a problem of young women and their little children.

So, from my point of view, I don't see a necessary conflict between the Iowa plan and what we're trying to do. The States like Iowa would be perfectly free to design their own plans and to be as tough as they wished under our law. And as a matter of fact, for the first time under this bill, if it passes as I have proposed it, we will specifically and clearly authorize States to go beyond the requirements of the Federal framework. But remember, this is a very large, complicated country in which the economic realities are very different from place to place, often within State borders, and certainly across State lines.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Bonnie Campbell is the Democratic nominee for Governor of Iowa. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Honoring the Praemium Imperiale Arts Award Recipients

June 16, 1994

Thank you very much. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. Mr. Sejima, thank you for your fine words and for giving us the history of the Japan Art Association and its relationship to President Grant in his visit to Japan.

I had a sense of the great tradition of the Imperial Family when the Emperor and Empress were here a couple of nights ago with the First Lady and I, and the Emperor was taken upstairs to my office. And we were talking about American history, and I said, "This desk I use in my office was President Grant's Cabinet table." He said, "Yes, I know. My great-grandfather welcomed him to Japan." I had a desk; he had a family experience. [Laughter]

There are many very distinguished Americans here, including our great former Ambassador to Japan, Senator Mike Mansfield, and Maestro Rostropovich, who was just here to play for the Emperor and Empress. I thank